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ABSTRACT

This booklet summarizes findings of a study, the Effective Schools Project, which sought to promote public discussion about improving educational quality in Australia. Questionnaires that were distributed with 300,000 booklets elicited a total of 7,203 responses from principals, parents, staff, and schools. Respondents were asked to identify the important components of an effective-school curriculum, the extent of parent and teacher roles, and the goals for student learning. Findings indicate that: (1) accountability is viewed as a local issue; (2) discipline problems are not seen as a major concern; (3) other goals are ranked equally or at least as important as academic achievement; and (4) the role of central administration is to set broad policy guidelines and to provide schools with professional support services. Some characteristics of an effective school include a central focus on learning and a conducive school climate; a concern for the learning and welfare of all its students; a committed and professional staff; an organizational culture characterized by collaborative decision making and effective educational leadership; a curriculum that is relevant, coherent, and inclusive; a focus on ongoing professional development; and parent involvement. (LMI)

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